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General Assembly

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Committee on Information
Thirtieth session
28 April-9 May 2008

Provisional agenda and annotations/programme of work

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
4. Statement by the Chairperson.
5. Admission of new members.
6. Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.
7. General debate.
8. Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General.
9. Open-ended working group of the Committee on Information.
10. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

Annotations/programme of work

28 April 2008

Opening of the session

The session will be opened by the Acting Chairperson of the Committee on Information.

Election of officers

At the beginning of its twenty-ninth session, the Committee elected a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur to serve for the next two years. The position of the Chairperson and that of one of the Vice-Chairpersons fell vacant at the end of 2007 following the departure of Rudolf Christen (Chairperson — Switzerland) and Estevao Umba Alberto (Vice-Chairperson — Angola) from their

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posts in New York. At the beginning of its thirtieth session, the Committee will elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson to replace them for the remainder of the term.

Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

The provisional agenda has been prepared on the basis of consultations among the members of the Bureau of the Committee on Information.

Statement by the Chairperson

The Chairperson will address the Committee at its opening meeting.

Admission of new members

The Committee will consider requests for membership in the Committee on Information.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information will address the Committee at its opening meeting to provide an update on the activities of the Department and report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 62/111 A and B of 17 December 2007.

28-30 April 2008

General debate

Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information — Part I (A/AC.198/2008/2)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information — Part II (A/AC.198/2008/3)

1-7 May 2008[1]

Open-ended working group of the Committee on Information

The Secretariat will require a 48-hour period to process the draft report of the Committee in all official languages.

9 May 2008

Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session

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[1] 3 May 2008: commemoration of World Press Freedom Day. The General Assembly, by its decision 48/432 of 20 December 1993, declared 3 May World Press Freedom Day. The Department of Public Information will hold a panel discussion on 1 May to commemorate this event. This is not considered to be an official meeting of the Committee on Information.

United Nations A/AC.198/2008/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 February 2008

Original: English

Committee on Information
Thirtieth session
28 April-9 May 2008

Activities of the Department of Public Information (part one)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its mission to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact, the Department of Public Information continues to coordinate its communications campaigns on key priority areas and to maintain a balance between new and traditional means of communications. It also makes every effort to widen the pool of its communications partners and to strengthen its outreach to the public in both developed and developing countries through the network of United Nations information centres. In implementing its wide range of activities, the Department is guided by a culture of evaluation and performance management.

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 62/111 B, summarizes the key advances made by the Department since July 2007 in promoting the work of the United Nations to a global audience.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/111 B, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called on the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information, which met in September 2007, advised the Department to cluster the requested information around thematic areas and to present it in two parts. Accordingly, part one of the present report, addresses such areas as general activities, communications on thematic issues and United Nations peacekeeping, news services, library services and outreach services. Part two (A/AC.198/2008/3) addresses two specific areas: the activities of the network of United Nations information centres, and the United Nations website. Unless otherwise indicated, parts one and two combined cover the activities of the Department for the period July 2007 to February 2008.

3. Also in its resolution 62/111 B, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in his report to the thirtieth session of the Committee on Information proposals, along with their financial implications, to improve the scope of press releases in addition to the existing languages in order to widen the United Nations message, assuring their comprehensiveness and up-to-date nature, bearing in mind budgetary constraints. Such proposals are contained in the annex to part two of the report.

II. Strategic directions of the Department of Public Information

4. The mission of the Department of Public Information is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact. In approaching that goal, the Department has focused on coordinated communications campaigns in key priority areas, maintaining a balance between new communications technologies, especially the Internet, and traditional means of communications, including radio and print materials, widening the pool of its communications partners and strengthening its outreach to the public in both developed and developing countries through the network of United Nations information centres. The Department's activities are guided by the imperative of promoting a culture of evaluation and performance management.

A. Strategic communications planning

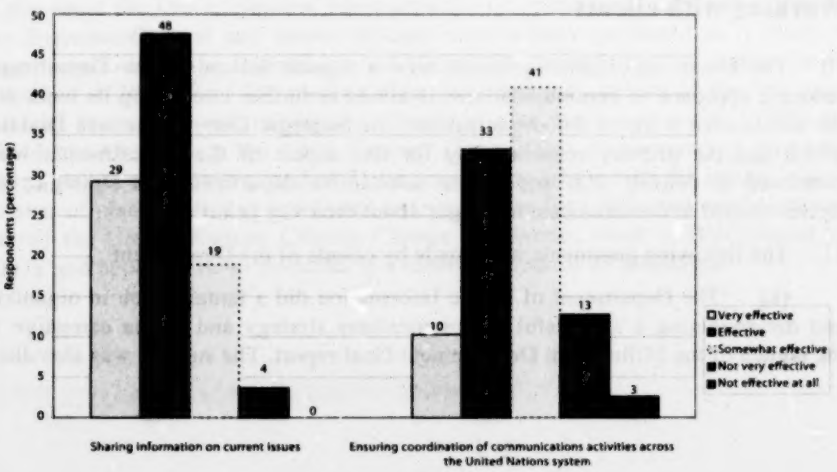
5. By developing its strategic communications workplans in the field and at Headquarters on the basis of broad communications priority themes identified early in the year, the Department has been able to achieve an increased degree of focus in its worldwide communications activities, as well as improved synergy between Headquarters and the field, with a noteworthy increase in the involvement of United

Nations country teams and United Nations communications groups. In January 2008, the Department, led by its Strategic Communications Division and guided by the vision of the Secretary-General, identified broad communications priority themes, organized according to the three pillars of the Organization — development, peace and security, and human rights — as well as climate change. In addition to identifying those four broad priority themes, the Department pointed to the Secretary-General's emphasis on the importance of the delivery of results by a stronger and more accountable Organization that can advance the global common good by securing global public goods, which will guide our communications efforts. The Department also identified Africa as a regional focus, and youth as a strategic audience, for its communications work. It also provided a preliminary calendar of activities to be organized in 2008 in the aforementioned areas and a note on the four International Years designated by the General Assembly for observance in 2008. This information was shared with the network of United Nations information centres, which were asked to develop their own workplans based on this guidance, taking into account local considerations and opportunities.

B. System-wide cooperation

6. Established by the Department of Public Information in 2002, the United Nations Communications Group has now emerged as a strong unifying platform for United Nations communicators. Through weekly meetings at Headquarters, issue-specific task forces and annual meetings at the principals' level, it continues to provide an effective mechanism to develop and implement common communications strategies. The Group's membership has steadily grown and now includes the entire United Nations system. In 2007, the Group held 33 weekly meetings (compared with 26 in 2006). In a survey conducted at the end of 2007, as many as 77 per cent of the respondents said the weekly meeting was either very effective or effective in achieving its stated goal of sharing the latest and most accurate information and in ensuring the coordination of communications activities across the United Nations system (see figure I). Some members also called for the weekly meeting to be more focused on communications strategies on key system-wide issues.

Figure I
Effectiveness of United Nations Communications Group weekly briefings in 2007



7. The Group has created several communications task forces on specific issues, including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, the Arab world and public-opinion polling. These task forces have proved particularly effective in developing and implementing joint United Nations system communications strategies.

8. With the establishment of United Nations communications groups at the country level, United Nations communicators at the national level have found an effective tool for pooling their resources and combining their efforts to achieve common communications goals. So far, more than 80 country-level communications groups have been created. While the results vary, generally speaking these efforts have had a positive impact, as set out below:

(a) In Pakistan, the communications group has created a common newsletter and transformed the United Nations Information Centre library into a United Nations system resource centre;

(b) In Uzbekistan, the local communications group has created a common database of all special events;

(c) In Kenya, during the recent political crisis, the United Nations Information Centre held 11 press briefings in the period from 2 to 11 January involving United Nations system organizations under the banner of the United Nations Communications Group.

C. Publicizing the activities of the General Assembly

9. The work and decisions of the General Assembly feature prominently in the Department's news output. All meetings of the General Assembly are webcast in English and in the floor language. The General Assembly website was revamped for the sixty-second session, making it easier to find documents, resolutions and the work programmes of the respective committees. The new site, available in all six official languages and fully accessible to persons with disabilities, is now more General Assembly-focused. However, access through a session-based page has been retained. The Department also loans a staff member to serve as the spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly.

D. Working with clients

10. The client consultation process, now a regular feature of the Department's strategic approach to communications, is aimed at further integrating its work with the substantive work of the Organization. The Strategic Communications Division, which has the primary responsibility for this aspect of the Department's work, continued to consult with and advise substantive departments on strategies and tactics needed to communicate messages about their key priorities.

11. The following comments were made by clients of the Department:

(a) "The Department of Public Information did a fantastic job in organizing and disseminating a successful communications strategy and media campaign for the launch of the Millennium Development Goal report. The success was also due to

the effective mechanism of coordination among agencies" (Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs);

(b) "The relationship between the office of the United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSIC) and the Department of Public Information was consistently good, and we managed to maintain media coverage for the launch of the 2007 UNSIC report in the way we wanted" (David Nabarro, United Nations System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza).

E. Coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General

12. The Department maintains a close working relationship with the Office of the Spokesperson. The daily morning strategic communications meeting brings together the Spokesperson and the Deputy Spokesperson, senior officials of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Department, to initiate and develop guidance for the daily noon briefing. Department-produced fact sheets and background materials are distributed through the Office of the Spokesperson as well as other mechanisms. The Department also helps arrange and hosts press briefings and interviews with senior officials on a range of issues. Throughout the day, Staff of the Office of the Spokesperson work with their counterparts in the Department of Public Information media accreditation, United Nations Television and the United Nations information centres to ensure that media coverage of the United Nations is as efficient and effective as possible. The information centres also provide valuable media-related support to the Spokesperson travelling with the Secretary-General on his official visits to Member States. In September 2007, for example, when the Secretary-General visited the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in connection with negotiations for a joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur, the United Nations Information Centre in Tripoli, in coordination with the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, helped generate coverage in 21 regional newspapers and special programmes in four radio stations and four television networks.

13. The Department also continued to work in close cooperation with the Office of the Spokesperson and the Director of Communications in the Office of the Secretary-General to correct inaccuracies and address misrepresentations in the media about the United Nations. More proactively, opinion and editorial articles by the Secretary-General and senior officials were widely published as a result of vigorous efforts by the Department and United Nations information centres. In the latter half of 2007, some 295 media outlets published such articles by the Secretary-General. The article with the highest number of placements was entitled "Why the World has Changed in the UN's Favour" (June 2007). It appeared in 66 media outlets in 41 countries in a total of 21 languages. The article with the second highest number of placements was on climate change. It was first published on the opening day of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali (December 2007), and appeared in 40 countries in a record number of 23 languages.

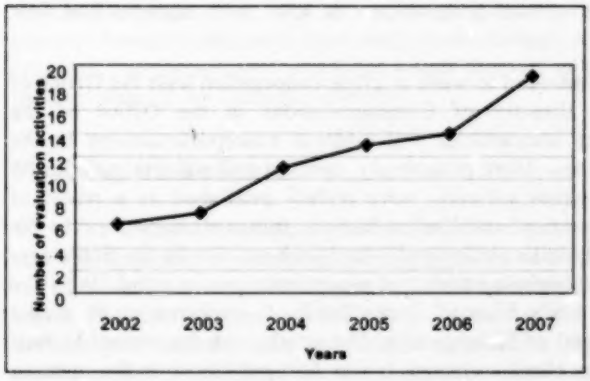
F. Multilingualism

14. In response to General Assembly resolution 61/266, the Department continued to promote multilingualism in its activities. The United Nations News Centre, the global gateway to news about the United Nations on the Web, and United Nations Radio programmes are now available in all official languages. United Nations Radio programmes are also produced in Portuguese, Kiswahili and other non-official languages, namely, Bangla, French Creole, Hindi, Indonesian and Urdu. The television programme *UN in Action* is made available in several of the official languages, according to demand. The Department is also looking into ways of expanding the translation and production by United Nations information centres of important United Nations documents into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations.

G. Focus on evaluation

15. Fostering a culture of evaluation within the Department of Public Information has led to a surge in assessment activities by its programme managers (see figure II). In 2002, when the annual programme impact review was first introduced, the Department undertook six evaluations. By 2007, the number of evaluations had more than tripled, to 19 programme assessments, covering a wide range of Department products, services and activities. The Department has also been working to improve its data-collection tools, including through the expansion of its capacity to measure the reach of its products. For example, the Department now tracks the number of times that United Nations Television videos are taken by television stations using satellite feeds.

Figure II
Evaluation activities



III. Thematic issues

A. The Millennium Development Goals

16. The promotion of the Millennium Development Goals is one of the key priorities of the Department. As part of its continuing work in this area, the Department worked closely with the Millennium Campaign to provide support to the "Stand Up and Speak Out against Poverty" initiative. More than 30 information centres worked with their country partners to contribute to the increased participation in 2007 of more than 43 million people worldwide, exceeding the Guinness World Record set the previous year.

17. To spur action on the Millennium Development Goals at the crucial halfway mark, the Department promoted the launch, in Geneva on 2 July, of the *Millennium Development Goals report 2007* by the Secretary-General, as well as more than 20 regional launches organized by information centres and United Nations system partners. Extensive media coverage was generated, reflecting the key messages in the press materials and closely corresponding to regional and national press events. The Department also boosted media outreach for the inaugural meeting, at Headquarters in September, of the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group which was convened by the Secretary-General, and worked with information centres in Buenos Aires, Cairo, Dar es Salaam and New Delhi to organize media round tables in order to focus press attention on what is needed if the Goals are to be achieved at the regional level.

B. Human rights

18. A United Nations system-wide human rights advocacy campaign for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was launched on 10 December 2007 with the overarching theme of "Dignity and justice for all of us". A United Nations Communications Group task force is facilitating the coordination of system-wide outreach activities throughout the year. The activities include:

(a) A special sixtieth anniversary edition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (DPI/876/REV.4);

(b) A two-page, easy-to-print online version of the Declaration, as well as a template for local language versions and a CD-ROM collection of historical photographs and artwork to be used by the United Nations information centres;

(c) A brochure outlining ideas for celebrating the anniversary, to be shared with civil society, businesses, Governments and academia;

(d) A website about Human Rights Day 2007 and the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary (http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/);

(e) An exhibition of cartoons highlighting the sixtieth anniversary, entitled "Sketching human rights", launched in advance of Human Rights Day in the public lobby at United Nations Headquarters;

(f) The launch by the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels of an interactive, information-sharing website (http://www.knowyourrights2008.org), in cooperation with the United Nations information services in Geneva and Vienna

and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with support from France, Italy and Switzerland.

19. In December, an opinion and editorial article about the Declaration by the High Commissioner for Human Rights was placed by United Nations information centres in newspapers in Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lesotho, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine.

20. On the occasion of the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 62/149, by which the Assembly called for a moratorium on the death penalty, an opinion and editorial article by the High Commissioner was placed in prominent publications in China, Germany, India, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America. Seven press conferences were arranged for human rights rapporteurs to coincide with their presentations to the Third Committee and at other times during the year.

C. Climate change

21. The Department chaired an inter-agency task force, with a view to keeping the focus on the priority issue of climate change, especially with regard to the launch of the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the coordination and promotion of two major events: the high-level event on climate change on 24 September, and the Climate Change Conference, held in Bali in December.

22. For the high-level event, the Department led the task force in producing one coordinated press kit projecting a unified message on this crucial issue. It was presented on the website "Gateway to the UN System's Work on Climate Change" (http://www.un.org/climatechange/), which is also an initiative of the task force and is coordinated and produced by the Department. The inter-agency media team, including officers from the Department, mobilized to contact dozens of media outlets and set up interviews, and information centres contacted and monitored regional media.

23. Media analysis showed that coverage of the event was almost universal in the international media and in all regions, with the majority of articles picking up the main message that the high-level event was designed to generate momentum for the launch of a political negotiating process in Bali. The Secretary-General was frequently portrayed as the driving force behind the United Nations event. The following comments were among those made in the media:

(a) "UN convenes largest-ever meeting of global leaders on climate change" (*Xinhua*);

(b) The United Nations takes the lead to "galvanize world leaders" (*Gulf News*);

(c) "All eyes are on Bali" (*The Irish Times*);

(d) "It is essential to conduct negotiations under UN leadership" (*Asahi Shimbun*).

Figure III
Media response to the Bali Conference outcome (percentage)

24. For the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali, the Department worked with the climate change task force, the Secretary-General's climate change team and the network of United Nations information centres to coordinate outreach, messages and activities in Bali, as well as to amplify and monitor media coverage. Again, media coverage was widespread: an analysis of more than 500 clippings from some 170 media outlets in 49 countries showed that 46 per cent of the media portrayed the Conference outcome as being positive, 32 per cent as being neutral and 22 per cent as being negative (see figure III). Opinion articles on the Conference were also generally favourable. Of the editorials monitored, 66 per cent were positive and 18 per cent negative, while 45 per cent of opinion and editorial articles were positive and 21 per cent were negative. Negative or unfavourable accounts of the Conference generally reflected the opinions of those who either doubt that climate change is a problem or believe that the results of Bali did not go far enough. In terms of overall coverage, 96 per cent considered the role of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in support of the process to be very positive.

D. World Summit on the Information Society

25. The Department continued to work with partners to publicize the many initiatives carried out in implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society. It helped to build media interest in the seven major events organized by the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development during 2007, culminating in the "Connect Africa" summit, held in Kigali on 29 and 30 October. It also handled the communications arrangements for the second annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 15 November. The extensive and positive media coverage included more than 400 original press articles (170 in Portuguese, 140 in English, 60 in Spanish and 40 in French), as well as broadcast reports by BBC, the Globo television network and CNN Español.

E. The question of Palestine

26. The Department continued to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine by training five Palestinian broadcast journalists (two men and three women) in November and December 2007, updating the booklet *The question of Palestine and the United Nations* in the six official-language versions and updating the permanent exhibitions on Palestine at Headquarters and in Geneva. The training programme, which started in 1995 pursuant to a General Assembly resolution, has trained a total of 122 Palestinian journalists to date. The Department assisted in the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, which included a Palestinian cultural exhibition in the public lobby of the General Assembly building.

F. Dialogue among civilizations

27. The Department assisted the Office of the Alliance of Civilizations in its effort to publicize the first Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held in Madrid on 15 and 16 January 2008. A background press briefing was organized at Headquarters and a press release and a media advisory were circulated to targeted media. An information officer from the Department also provided media support at the meeting. In addition, arrangements were made for the participation in the forum of Paulo Coelho, United Nations Messenger of Peace, to promote intercultural dialogue. The Department also participated in consultations with the Alliance secretariat on the development of its rapid reaction response mechanism, an online directory of experts on intercultural issues to whom the media can turn to in times of international crisis, and the Alliance of Civilizations clearing house, an online educational tool aimed at improving cross-cultural understanding on a wide variety of issues.

Box 1
Remembering victims of the Holocaust

United Nations information centres promoted the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (27 January) through a variety of activities:

In Rio de Janeiro, a special event was held attended by the President of Brazil, two state governors and the mayor of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

In Prague, a series of educational programmes entitled "Remembering the Holocaust" was held for secondary school students.

In Tokyo, an educational workshop was held on the theme of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust and human rights.

In Poland, an exhibition opened of the best posters selected at the 2007 contest entitled "Holocaust: forever in our memory", held for secondary school students.

In Zambia, a special event was organized by the United Nations information centres in Lusaka and the Youth United Nations Association of Zambia.

At the United Nations Office in Kyiv, a round-table discussion was held in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Holocaust Study Centre.

G. Outreach Programme on the Holocaust and the United Nations

28. On 28 January, the outreach programme on the Holocaust and the United Nations organized a memorial ceremony and concert in the General Assembly Hall — one of many events held to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The outreach programme also organized, with the participation of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, its annual seminar in New York, involving leading grass-roots organizations working to combat hatred. Other major activities in the past six months include:

(a) The publication of three discussion papers by experts in the field of genocide and Holocaust studies from Ghana, the United States and the Sudan;

(b) Special film screenings, a panel discussion and exhibitions on the Holocaust, and the launch of a United Nations stamp commemorating the victims of the Holocaust;

(c) Four one-week training seminars for national information officers from the global network of United Nations information centres. These seminars aim to raise public awareness, at no cost to the Organization, about the Holocaust and its relevance today. Another such seminar will be held in Berlin early in 2008.

H. The Rwanda genocide and the United Nations

29. The Department carried out the activities of the outreach programme on the Rwanda genocide through a variety of materials, events and exhibitions. The "Lessons from Rwanda" exhibition, produced by the Department in partnership with the Aegis Trust, travelled to locations in Burkina Faso, Canada, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and United Republic of Tanzania. United Nations information centres and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda also held conferences, workshops and seminars on the prevention of genocide.

30. An information kit produced in November in English and French includes information on the programme, including backgrounders and audio-visual material. Two posters, on sexual violence and on supporting survivors, were produced in English, French and Kinyarwanda. A website in all six official languages was launched in December.

31. In October and November, the Department organized a photography project that aims to document, through photographs taken by survivors themselves, the hopes, dreams and lives of the participants, who are drawn from a cross-section of Rwandan society and include orphans, widows and young people, as well as a perpetrator. Arrangements were made for equipment used in the project to be donated for use in local capacity-building projects. As a result, a multilingual photographic exhibition is scheduled to be displayed this year in Montreal and Toronto, Canada; Dakar; Ouagadougou; Kigali; Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania; and Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, South Africa.

I. Two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

32. The Department, in collaboration with the Caribbean Community ambassadors' caucus, spearheaded a programme of outreach activities in 2007 to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, which included the following:

(a) A commemorative meeting of the General Assembly;

(b) A panel discussion, a briefing for non-governmental organizations, an exhibition entitled "Lest we forget: the triumph over slavery", a cultural exposition showcasing the music and literature of the African diaspora, a series of United Nations Radio programmes, a dedicated website in the six official United Nations languages, articles in *UN Chronicle* and a poster;

(c) A variety of activities organized by United Nations information centres in Ankara, Asunción, Bogota, Brussels, Khartoum, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Moscow, Port of Spain, Prague, Tokyo and Yerevan.

J. The New Partnership for Africa's Development

33. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa's blueprint for development, continued to be a major focus for the Department, which continued to highlight United Nations support for its implementation. A special issue of *Africa Renewal* magazine was produced on the goals, achievements and challenges of NEPAD, and arrangements were made to publish feature articles about NEPAD in major media in Africa and Asia. In 2007, some 30 articles in English, and the same number in French, which had been placed in major media, were republished or posted a total of 370 times in English and French in print media and on websites, including major Africa-interest web portals such as allafrica.com, africafiles.org and afrik.com. Material from *Africa Renewal* appeared on weblogs 23 times in 2007.

34. Working in close consultation with the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, the Department promoted the second international conference on demobilization, disarmament, rehabilitation and stability in Africa, held in Kinshasa from 12 to 14 June 2007. The public information campaign resulted in at least 60 articles on the conference in the Congolese, other African and international media.

IV. Public information and United Nations peacekeeping

35. The Department of Public Information continues to play an important role in planning the public information components of new peacekeeping operations and in providing communications support and guidance to ongoing missions. For example, the Department planned the public information component for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, recruited staff, designed and launched the mission website and drafted and disseminated guidance and fact sheets on mission developments. It also designed the public information section for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, drafted the initial communications strategy, worked with the European Union (EU) to align the public information

activities of both the United Nations and the European Union missions there and participated in the recruitment and deployment of initial public information staff.

36. Staff from the Department visited the missions in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Sudan and Timor-Leste to assist public information components with their communications strategies and challenges. The Department also made progress in helping peacekeeping missions to develop their own websites by introducing a content management system, which, once fully implemented, will ensure that peacekeeping operations can maintain consistent and up-to-date websites with minimal technical expertise.

A. Cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support

37. The Department of Public Information worked closely with both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in recruiting public information staff for peacekeeping operations, including for new public information leadership in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, UNAMID, MINURCAT and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). The Department of Public Information and the Department of Field Support have developed extensive personnel rosters for all levels and types of expertise of field public information staff. The Department of Public Information also seconded a senior staff member to serve as chief of public information for UNMIT, as well as a senior spokesperson for the Darfur negotiations in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

38. The Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations also cooperated on making better use of United Nations Radio in peace operations. In 2007, the Department of Public Information conducted its fourth annual training course for field public information officers with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, inviting chiefs of radio from all peacekeeping operations to share best practices and lessons learned and to discuss new policies relating to United Nations Radio. The Department of Public Information is currently participating in a multi-agency study of peacekeeping radio stations, which will be used to assist in the future planning of peacekeeping operations and for the possible transition of United Nations stations to locally controlled enterprises.

B. Ending sexual exploitation and abuse

39. The Department of Public Information continued to assist the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in raising awareness on progress in ending sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel, by means of public information materials and press briefings, both at Headquarters and in the field. During the past year, for example, UNMIL was able to report that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse had fallen dramatically during the second half of the year. Media coverage of the issue is now less sensational than in the past.

V. News services

40. Led by its News and Media Division, the Department has continued to bring news regarding the full range of the Organization's diverse activities to the world on a daily basis, through various media, including print, radio, television, photography and the Internet.

A. United Nations Television

41. United Nations Television provides coverage of events at Headquarters that is accessed directly by the international television news agencies Associated Press Television News (APTN) and Reuters Television, as well as by a number of large broadcasting organizations, including ABC, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, BBC, CBS, CCTV, CNN, the European Broadcasting Union, FOX News, NBC and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Several other broadcasting organizations receive the United Nations signal indirectly. Stories covering United Nations activities in the field, particularly peacekeeping operations and the work of various United Nations agencies, continue to reach an international audience through UNifeed, a daily 10-minute satellite feed transmitted via APTN, Eurovision, Reuters and SABC to more than 1,000 broadcasters around the world. In 2008, with support from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNifeed will launch a web-based delivery service to broadcasters. The service will supplement the satellite feed, enabling the Department to post additional stories on the website.

Box 2

The global monitoring service Teletrax, shows that in 2007, UNifeed news stories aired at least 3,163 times worldwide. It should be noted that not all stations using United Nations materials are monitored.

42. The launch of the new monthly television programme *21st Century* has provided an opportunity to expand the global audience for United Nations Television. The programme features high-quality human-interest stories, easily adaptable to language versions, reflecting some of the most important global issues engaging the United Nations family. The programme is carried by a number of broadcasting companies, including BBC World, TVE (Spain), CCTV, Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Deutsche Welle, DK4 (Denmark), France 24, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, SABC Africa, Viet Nam Television, TV3 Ghana and the Africa Channel, with many other stations also showing interest in the new format.

43. The award-winning *UN in Action* series continues to be broadcast by 38 subscribers. They include Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Chongqing Broadcasting Group of China, CCTV, CNN Español, RTP (Portugal), TVE (Spain), Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Television Hong Kong, Trend News Agency (Azerbaijan), Viet Nam Television, Link TV and TV3 Ghana.

B. United Nations Radio

44. In its ongoing efforts to bring the core messages of the Organization to the widest possible global audience, United Nations Radio has continued to expand and strengthen its partnerships with a broad range of local, national and regional broadcasters. New United Nations Radio partners include Liaoning Regional Radio and its six affiliate stations (China); RTÉ Radio (Ireland); Radio Nationale du Mali; Trend News Agency (Azerbaijan); Agencia Europa Press Latin American Service; FM Voz de Esperanza (Argentina); Rádio difusão Portuguesa (Portugal); and Abu Dhabi Radio.

Box 3
Expanding the reach of United Nations Radio

The Department of Public Information recently contracted a leading audience research organization to provide a list of potential radio partners in 20 countries in Africa and Asia that are transmitting in one or more of the languages in which United Nations Radio broadcasts. The Department is now contacting potential stations identified by the study to promote the use of its programmes. In addition, distribution to francophone Africa is under way, targeting 200 private, commercial and community radio stations in Africa, using the WorldSpace Afristar satellite and the Radio France Internationale OrdiSpace download system.

45. On the basis of the success of the United Nations Radio News Service, a United Nations Foundation pilot project which focuses on the North American market, offering short news reports and sound bites to radio stations over the Web, United Nations Radio has begun to shift away from offering exclusively packaged programmes towards providing frequent short news reports and access to raw audio. This variety of formats offers broadcasters more flexibility and convenience in using United Nations Radio material. Following the success of the English-language service, the system has been replicated in Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese and will be extended further to include other languages in the first half of 2008.

46. The newly acquired content distribution network is also being used to distribute audio files to server nodes worldwide, ensuring faster file downloading by partner stations and making it easier to reach the huge population of Internet users. The additional storage capability of the network will also enable United Nations Radio sites to make available a vast archive of recent and historical audio programmes.

C. Press releases

47. Accuracy, objectivity and timeliness remain the cornerstones for the production of press releases. Building on the surveys and media analyses completed last year, which found that a majority of journalists at Headquarters and in the field considered such press releases to be useful to them in their work, the Department is

now studying ways to improve access to and the usability of the online versions of the press releases by making stylistic changes and modifications to the current database. Further, given the interest expressed by Member States in the possibility of expanding the press release service to the other official languages, the Department has studied a range of alternatives, providing an overview of the costs involved in the annex to part two of the report (A/AC.198/2008/3).

Box 4

In total, 84 per cent of all press releases, in the working languages of English and French, are posted within two hours of the close of a meeting.

D. News Centre

48. As part of its continuing efforts to improve the online delivery of news and related resources about the United Nations to global audiences, the Department has launched a redesigned version of its main news portal, the United Nations News Centre. The redesign effort, which began with the English-language site, with work continuing on other language versions, is aimed at enhancing the site's usability, visual attractiveness and ability to facilitate visitors' access to the broadest range of related content, including the Department's multimedia products and services. Links to the News Centre and stories from the associated United Nations News Service now appear on a growing number of external websites around the world. The total number of unique visitors to the English-language site of the News Centre reached 1 million, in November 2007. The number of subscribers to the site's e-mail news service (in French and English) increased steadily, reaching a combined total of nearly 52,000 in December 2007.

E. "Ten stories the world should hear more about"

49. Throughout the period under review, the Department continued its efforts to draw the interest of world media to stories that do not attract sufficient attention. This was achieved, in part by giving more prominent coverage to such issues in the Department's multimedia products, including reports by the United Nations News Service and programmes by United Nations Radio and United Nations Television. At the same time, the Department continued, working in close cooperation with various United Nations departments, offices, agencies and programmes, to compile a new list of "Ten stories the world should hear more about", which is scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2008.

Box 5

Unique United Nations Radio programmes

The Department of Public Information is preserving and making available on the United Nations website unique United Nations Radio dramas and documentaries from the period from the 1940s to the 1970s.

The collection is vast, but an initial sampling has been identified and digitized. The selections include the voices of eminent personalities, such as former United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, human rights champion Eleanor Roosevelt, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Dwight D. Eisenhower of the United States, communist party leader Nikita Khrushchev of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as well as well-known celebrities such as Danny Kaye, Bing Crosby, Audrey Hepburn, Laurence Olivier and Pablo Neruda, among others.

F. Archives

50. Progress has been made in restoring and preserving photo archives and in serving clients. Of the digitized input, the photograph collection of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, consisting of 3,000 records on the establishment of the United Nations, is now 95 per cent complete. As a result of the upgrading of the Networked Interactive Content Access system, the scanned images and their associated captions are ingested into the photo database at a faster speed than before, facilitating the archiving of more legacy photographs this year than the previous years. The introduction of the content distribution network will make available more high-resolution photographs, both current and historic, for self-service download over the Internet.

51. The Department continues to participate in the Archives at Risk group, of which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is also a member and which provides a forum to help find funds to digitize more of its unique audio-visual collection. In 2008, much of that collection will be prepared for storage off site in anticipation of the capital master plan renovation of United Nations Headquarters.

VI. Knowledge-sharing and library services

A. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library

52. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library promotes knowledge-sharing and provides information services to its various stakeholders throughout the world. While at Headquarters the Library provides direct support to clients through training, coaching, reference services and content analysis, it has extended its reach to Secretariat staff worldwide through its internal communication and knowledge-sharing strategy and to Member States through its network of depository libraries. One of the challenges facing the Library in 2008 will be to ensure continued high-quality service throughout the period of the capital master plan relocation.

B. Research services, training and coaching

53. Research support and training of mobile Secretariat and mission staff in the use of new information tools and resources remains a high priority. In the fall of 2007, the Library organized a very successful training programme in General Assembly documentation, which was attended by almost 200 permanent mission staff. An equally successful follow-up training session, on Security Council documentation, was held in February 2008. Training programmes are updated to respond to client needs and additional courses have been designed to enable attendees to identify, evaluate and make efficient use of the high-quality online resources that the Library maintains or to which it subscribes. Customized training is available for specialized groups, such as groups of experts and mission staff. Through individual coaching and training, the Personal Knowledge Management programme helps Secretariat staff and delegates alike face the challenges posed by the overwhelming amount of information to be managed in a rapidly changing, and increasingly electronic, work environment.

Box 6

A total of 930 participants attended more than 120 training sessions and 203 individual coaching sessions organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in 2007.

C. Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries

54. The Department continues to lead the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries in the coordination of its activities. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva share overall responsibility for digitizing older United Nations documents and jointly preparing content management manuals and guidelines. The Personal Knowledge Management programme is gradually being adopted by member libraries, which also participate in the cooperative purchasing of electronic resources through the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium, coordinated by the Library. The progress made by the Consortium was presented at the annual meeting of the Knowledge Sharing and Information Management Group of United Nations System Libraries, held in Rome in September. The meeting also provided an opportunity to share best practices and knowledge among libraries in the United Nations system.

D. Depository libraries

55. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library reaches out to Member States through its network of more than 400 depository libraries in 145 countries. In February and October 2007, the Dominican Republic and regional workshops of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific provided an opportunity to discuss the refocusing of this programme. The intention is to provide libraries, especially

those in developing countries, with technical support and training, teaching them how to access United Nations electronic information. By promoting new partnerships between national and academic libraries and United Nations information centres, this new approach will further extend the outreach capability of the United Nations.

E. iSeek

56. iSeek, the global Intranet of the Secretariat, supports the management reform process and fosters a culture of sharing of knowledge and resources. By building a community of staff across duty stations as part of its knowledge-sharing strategy, iSeek helps to initiate change in the Secretariat, allowing senior managers to communicate their messages to staff and facilitating the capture and sharing of institutional knowledge and the introduction of new technologies. Migration to portal technology supported by an identity-management system will ensure secure access to information available on iSeek by all stakeholders, including Member States.

F. Managing content and collections

57. In addition to creating bibliographic data for current United Nations documents and publications, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued with the retrospective indexing of important early documents. In 2007, almost 20,000 United Nations documents and publications produced at Headquarters and in regional offices were processed by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Developing the United Nations Bibliographic and Information System Thesaurus in all six official languages remains an important activity in the context of the enhancement of the Official Document System project.

58. As a multilingual resource, the Library collects, develops and maintains collections of United Nations and non-United Nations materials in the six official languages. Hard copies of publications related to peace and security and development are procured and made available to the Library's clients. Almost 22,000 items were borrowed from the collection for on-site consultation or lent out during 2007. The Library has steadily been expanding its online services. The planned relocation has made expediting the digitization of United Nations documents to ensure their availability more urgent. Ageing digitization equipment was replaced late in 2007 and, early in 2008, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management made available to the Library a high-speed book scanner for the digitization of early and now fragile United Nations documentation.

Box 7

A 2007 client survey carried out by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library indicated that 75 per cent of respondents prefer to access information online.

VII. Building partnerships with civil society

59. A central focus of the Department of Public Information has been expanding its partnership with civil society. The Department has been developing innovative ways and means of communicating United Nations messages through non-governmental organizations, educators, students, international celebrities and the private sector, in an increasingly integrated fashion.

A. Relationship between the Department of Public Information and non-governmental organizations

60. The sixtieth annual conference of the Department of Public Information for non-governmental organizations, held in September 2007, was devoted to the subject of climate change. It brought together more than 1,700 representatives of 469 non-governmental organizations from 62 countries who, for the first time in the conference's 60-year history, adopted a conference declaration. In the declaration, the non-governmental organization community committed itself to developing, over the following 12 months, a framework comprising both individual and collective action plans to combat climate change. Non-governmental organizations also reiterated their pledge to be active partners of the United Nations, local governments and civil society in implementing adaptation and mitigation strategies.

61. In view of the need to expand the reach of the United Nations to civil society organizations outside North America or those not yet associated with the Department of Public Information, the Department has initiated a process for the holding of annual conferences away from Headquarters in future, breaking with the 60-year practice of Headquarters-hosted events. In observance of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2008 conference is scheduled to be held in Paris, in partnership with UNESCO, the Government of France and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Box 8

The designation of 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day by the General Assembly in December 2007 can be traced to the momentum generated by a joint briefing by the Department of Public Information and non-governmental organizations on 28 June 2007 on the theme "Autism: raising awareness, changing attitudes".

B. Messengers of Peace programme

62. In 2007, the Secretary-General designated four new Messengers of Peace: Daniel Barenboim (Argentina/Israel), Paulo Coelho (Brazil), Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein (Jordan) and Midori Goto (United States of America). Early in 2008, George Clooney (United States), was also designated. Mr. Clooney travelled to United Nations peacekeeping missions in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan to raise awareness of and support

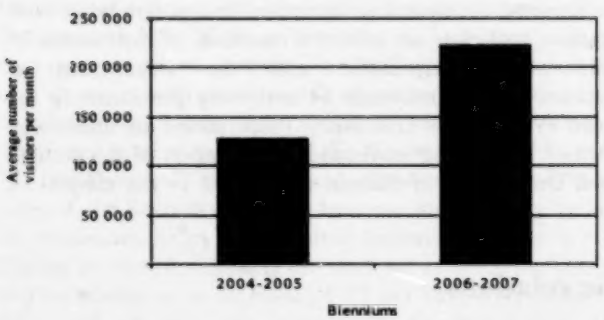
for United Nations peacekeeping efforts. He also visited India, a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping. At Headquarters, Mr. Clooney participated in a press conference and gave more than 15 interviews with international media. The Department launched a new website in all official languages for the Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassador programmes, which has averaged 14,000 page views per month. To help publicize the Millennium Campaign "Stand Up against Poverty" event in October, the Department coordinated interviews with the Messengers of Peace and the Goodwill Ambassadors that reached thousands of media outlets and millions of listeners globally through United Nations Radio. The Messengers also recorded call-to-action public-service announcements for broadcast around the world in all official languages.

VIII. Expanding educational outreach

63. The Department continues to expand and deepen its relationship with educational institutions, including the academic community, research institutions, civil society organizations and students.

64. Cyberschoolbus, the Department's Internet-based educational website, carried out a number of activities, including the launch of a new portal, "Ask the Secretary-General"; a feature on disarmament and non-proliferation for intermediate and secondary schools, developed in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs; a web feature on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in partnership with Magnum Photos, to mark the eighteenth anniversary of the Convention; and live video chats on the issues of nuclear weapons, human rights, climate change and Darfur.

Figure IV
Growth of unique visitors to the United Nations Cyberschoolbus



65. The Department organized annual student videoconferences for World Environment Day, on human rights and for the International Day of Peace. The latter included young people who assembled at United Nations peacekeeping missions and information centres.

Box 9
Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme

The 2007 Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme was held at Headquarters from 4 September to 11 October. Five print (including "new" media), five radio and three television journalists participated in briefings at Headquarters, visits to media organizations and meetings at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Atlanta Headquarters of CNN. The Department has found the six-week time frame to be optimum to accommodate this schedule of activities. Although the number of participants has been reduced slightly in recent years to 13 or 14 owing to increased costs, the number could, with additional funds, be increased again to a logistically and substantively desirable maximum of 15 or 16.

66. Another educational outreach activity of the Department is the UN Works programme. Activities included the creation of a new interactive website profiling stories of people in their communities to encourage and support multimedia campaigns with civil society; and a 16-page educational supplement about the Millennium Development Goals, circulated to 50,000 students and teachers in the United States. The website also featured the Secretary-General's appearance on the *Vibe Awards*, which aired on VH1, in recognition of the Jay-Z Water for Life campaign on water and sanitation. New multimedia campaigns about the Millennium Development Goals were also developed with MTV Networks.

67. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* and the *UN Chronicle* are a key part of the Department's efforts to engage the academic community. The fifty-ninth volume of the *Yearbook*, covering events in 2005, was finalized, and work began on the 2006 edition. A new, online, version of the *Yearbook* will be launched in 2008.

68. The Department has supported collaborative initiatives and programmes with institutions of higher education, including an informal coalition of institutions of higher learning that are already associated with the Department as non-governmental organizations, and a conference of university presidents in the United States, to be convened by Roosevelt University. Preparations are under way for two seminars on the theme "Unlearning intolerance", in support of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the context of respect for the environment.

IX. Strengthening public relations

A. Guided tours

69. The number of people who took a guided tour of the United Nations rose to 444,566 in 2007 from 436,755 in 2006 — the highest number since 2000. During such visits, guides provide information about the activities of the Organization, including with regard to such issues as the Millennium Development Goals, climate change and demining.

B. Group briefings

70. In 2007, the Department organized a full calendar of briefing programmes for visiting groups (students, educators, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, et cetera), as well as videoconferences and outside speaking engagements on many priority United Nations issues. Overall, 864 in-house briefings, 13 videoconferences and 52 outside speaking engagements reached 42,000 individuals.

C. Exhibitions

71. The Department continues to organize a rotating roster of public exhibitions. In 2007, 33 exhibitions were mounted in cooperation with a number of sponsors from both within and outside the Organization. Exhibition topics in 2007 included the dialogue among civilizations; human trafficking; drug-resistant tuberculosis; the Rwanda genocide; the exploration of Mars; indigenous peoples' culture; and the impact of environmental issues on indigenous peoples.

D. Public enquiries

72. In 2007, the Department responded to more than 42,000 enquiries from the public, including 7,833 letters, 3,926 e-mails, 809 telephone calls and questions from 4,390 walk-in visitors, as well as 25,692 petitions on various subjects. The general information website (http://www.un.org/geninfo) registered 478,072 page views in the six official languages.

X. Sales and marketing services

73. The promotion of United Nations publications is undertaken by the Department's Sales and Marketing Section through its offices and bookshops in Geneva and New York, a network of sales agents in over 60 countries and its e-commerce driven website. In 2007 the website was completely redesigned to provide users with an enhanced experience. Sales from the site continued to grow, increasing by 7 per cent compared with the previous year. The programme's traditional marketing included the dissemination of 80,000 publications catalogues, 250,000 flyers and brochures and attendance at over 40 book fairs. In terms of sales support, the Section worked to increase its efficiency by introducing contract staff in its warehouse. Sales at the United Nations bookshop in New York in 2007 were the highest on record, eclipsing the mark set in 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary, and representing an increase of 12 per cent over 2006. The Section also handled over 500 requests for permission to disseminate and sell United Nations publications as reprints of the original editions or translations for local markets. In total, the annual royalty income from these activities increased by 32 per cent.

74. *United Nations Development Business*, a self-financing print and online procurement publication of the Sales and Marketing Section, issued more than 8,500 procurement notices during 2007, working with 15 agencies (including the World Bank and all other major multilateral development banks) and reaching more than 1,200 subscribers in over 100 countries.

Box 10

A complete design and production service for the Organization is provided by the Department's Graphic Design Unit. Of particular note in 2007 were designs produced for three major events: the sixtieth annual conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations; the September 2007 high-level event on climate change; and the launch of the Secretary-General's campaign on violence against women.

XI. Publications Board

75. As a result of the Secretary-General's reform programme of 2002, the Executive Committees on Economic and Social Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, and Peace and Security, and the United Nations Development Group, are charged with planning and coordinating all publications within their respective thematic areas. This reform effort is aimed at rationalizing United Nations publications and improving their coherence and focus and avoiding duplications.

76. The Executive Committees are expected to lead interdepartmental discussions on publications, organized along thematic lines, as well as to determine target audiences. This process will ensure that the decision to publish a given publication is made by those who possess substantive knowledge of the topic and have a real stake in the success of the end product. As a result, all publications programmes proposed by Secretariat entities, funds and programmes are now channelled though the relevant Executive Committees. The Publications Board, chaired by the Department of Public Information, is exploring ways to ensure that the Executive Committees fulfil this mandate.

XII. Capital master plan and its impact

77. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 62/87 on the capital master plan, in which it provides for the accelerated renovation strategy IV, has made it possible for the Department to better determine the future of a number of its activities. As a result of discussions with the capital master plan team, a solution has been found to the problem of maintaining visitor and related services that will allow for the continuation of as many as possible throughout the renovation period, albeit at a reduced level. The strategy will provide an opportunity to maintain some visitor services, such as presentations by guides, the United Nations bookshop and exhibitions, although the future of others, such as group briefings and the non-governmental organization resource centre, remains unclear, as final decisions on those functions have yet to be concluded. The relocation of the staff and collections of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library will have an impact on its ability to provide services for the Secretariat and for missions during the renovation period, although a small information centre for delegations is planned as part of the temporary conference facility. The Library will seek to redesign its services through increased online facilities to support the information needs of the Organization.

78. Moving the audio-visual records may have an adverse impact on the ability of the Department to provide prompt service to international broadcasters. To ensure the widest possible distribution of the unique audio-visual material of the United Nations during the construction phase, the Department is exploring partnerships with international video archives. As for United Nations Photo, the entire collection of negatives that have yet to be digitized will be scanned and stored on servers so that they can be easily accessed by clients. This approach is not possible for film records because of the high costs involved.

XIII. Conclusions

Steady progress has been made

79. Gaining public understanding of and support for its work is a priority for the Organization. The Department of Public Information, through the clear articulation of its communications goals and optimal use of its resources, has made steady progress in reaching this objective. By adopting a strategic approach which calls for doing what matters most in areas where it can have the greatest impact, the Department focused on a number of priority areas in the reporting period, including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, peacekeeping and human rights. Its emphasis on increased cooperation with United Nations system partners through the United Nations Communications Group contributed to the progress made. In times of crisis, that partnership allowed the United Nations system to work together, to coordinate activities and to use a common approach for addressing communications concerns. In this regard, the guidelines for United Nations communicators on key issues have been both timely and effective. The successful expansion of the civil society outreach activities of the Department is another key element in its efforts to reach wider audiences around the world.

Emphasis on culture of evaluation is paying off

80. The Department's emphasis on a culture of evaluation has helped it to identify areas of strength and weakness. The emphasis on results has helped the Department to better align its products and activities with the needs of its target audiences. Since the introduction of a culture of evaluation, the Department has asked almost 25,000 users about the usefulness, relevance and quality of its programmes. In response to their feedback, the Department has made a variety of adjustments, so that today, the average positive rating of the products, services and activities of the Department of Public Information among its users is 84 per cent.

Public information capacity has been enhanced

81. These efforts have led to the enhancement of the public information capacity of the Organization and have bolstered the role of the Department of Public Information as the Organization's public voice.

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Activities of the Department of Public Information (Part two)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/111, section I of the present report outlines some of the steps taken by the Department of Public Information over the last six months to further rationalize the network of United Nations information centres, especially in developing countries, through partnerships, better use of information and communications technologies, and capacity-building. As a result of those efforts, United Nations information centres are better able to promote the work of the United Nations to the global audience.

Section II contains a review of progress made towards meeting the challenges presented in the quest for language parity on the United Nations website, provides additional information on the new requirements of ensuring accessibility to the website by persons with disabilities, and highlights progress towards more efficiently managing the content on the website.

The report also includes an annex, which presents the magnitude of costs related to the introduction of Department of Public Information press releases in languages other than English and French.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/111 B, the General Assembly noted the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session (A/AC.198/2007/4 and Corr.1) and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called on the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information, which met in September 2007, advised the Department to cluster the requested information around thematic areas and to present that information in two parts. The present report — part two of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information — addresses two specific areas: the activities of the network of United Nations information centres and the United Nations website and its progress towards parity among official languages. Unless otherwise indicated, parts one and two combined cover the Department's activities for the period July 2007 to February 2008.

3. Also in resolution 62/111 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in his report to the Committee on Information at its thirtieth session proposals, along with their financial implications, to improve the scope of press releases in addition to the existing languages in order to widen the United Nations message, assuring their comprehensiveness and up-to-date nature, bearing in mind budgetary constraints. Such proposals are included in the annex to this report.

Section I

The network of United Nations information centres: delivering better results

I. Background

4. The network of United Nations information centres includes 63 information centres, services, and information components around the world. They serve as field offices of the Department of Public Information, providing a public information presence for the Organization in countries around the world. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/111 B, emphasized the importance of this network in enhancing the public image of the United Nations and in disseminating messages on the United Nations to local populations, especially in developing countries. Guided by the decisions of the Committee on Information and building on progress made in the past years towards rationalizing the work of United Nations information centres, the Department has further strengthened their work by expanding partnerships with United Nations system organizations, Governments, civil society and the private sector, making better use of new information and communications technologies, bolstering its information presence in key locations by reallocating resources, and strengthening professional staffing. The overall objective has been to provide a structure and support base that makes possible better and more efficient service to a larger audience.

II. Expanding outreach, building new partnerships

A. United Nations information centres and United Nations country teams

5. Guided by the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) and the recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Secretary-General on United Nations System-wide Coherence of November 2006 (see A/61/583), United Nations information centres have been working to support United Nations country teams through the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG). This Group, now established in over 80 countries, including most countries where information centres are located, serves as a common communications platform for the United Nations system. In most cases, serving as secretariat, the centres play a key role in this forum.[1] The creation of UNCG has contributed to higher visibility for the work of the country teams and has increased coherence in communications work at the country level.

B. Reaching out to local media

6. United Nations information centres play a vital role in telling the United Nations story through the local media. Several centres have established ongoing arrangements with local media for a regular column or page devoted to United Nations issues. Partnership with the broadcast media is also the focus of many information centres.

- **UNIC Asunción** has arranged for publication of United Nations materials in major publications, such as *ABC Color*, *Última Hora* and *La Nación*, in their education-related supplement pages.
- **UNIC Beirut** has an agreement with two Lebanese daily newspapers to provide information materials selected by the centre for a "UN Supplement Page" in *Al-Balad* which appears in its Sunday edition, and for a biweekly magazine half-page "Window on the UN" in *Al-Mustaqbal*.
- **UNIC Cairo**, along with the rest of the United Nations country team in Egypt, sponsors a quarterly supplement of the *Al-Ahram* weekly called "Beyond".
- **UNIC Khartoum** negotiated the publication of extracts from the *Least Developed Countries Report 2007*, issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in *Sudan Vision*, an independent newspaper.
- **UNIC Dar es Salaam** produces radio programmes in Swahili and provides them to local radio stations.
- **UNIC Moscow** has arrangements with *Diplomat*, a Russian-language journal, for publishing at least five dedicated articles/interviews by senior United Nations officials or experts annually.

[1] For more information on UNCG at the country level, see part one of the report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2008/2).

- **UNIC Rio de Janeiro** has established a cooperative agreement with Empresa Brasileira de Comunicação (EBC), a public broadcasting company, to broadcast United Nations-produced radio and television programmes.

Box 1

Overall, the number of newspapers/magazine articles and television/radio broadcasts generated through the efforts of United Nations information centres in 2007 totalled 22,311, a 5.3 per cent increase over the previous year.

7. Information centres are increasingly becoming involved in supporting media development. In 2007, 54 training workshops for local journalists were organized by United Nations information centres in collaboration with various partners.

- **UNIC Jakarta**, along with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, organized a two-day media and stakeholders' workshop in October 2007 on the scientific and political aspects of climate change to give journalists a better understanding of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held from 3 to 14 December in Bali. That timely workshop contributed to the quality and quantity of the coverage of the Bali Conference by the media in Indonesia.

C. Working with civil society

8. Increasingly, United Nations information centres partner with civil society, including educational institutions, to widen the reach of information about the United Nations to audiences around the world. The creative energy of civil society organizations has enabled the centres to connect with new audiences and to diversify its promotional campaigns on key United Nations issues. This ever-growing partnership is best exemplified by the success of the 2007 Stand Up against Poverty and for Millennium Development Goals Campaign. Over 30 information centres worked with their civil society partners to boost participation to a total of over 43 million people worldwide.

- In **Japan**, UNIC Tokyo partnered with the Japan Soccer Association and organized a stand-up moment at the Egypt versus Japan game.
- In **Australia**, partnering with the Make Poverty History Campaign, UNIC Canberra organized a public event on the lawns of the Australian Parliament in which members of the Australian Federal Parliament participated.
- In **Kenya**, UNIC Nairobi was joined by 130 schools in the towns of Eldoret, Bungoma, Nakuru and Molo for a special event.
- In **Bangladesh**, with civil society partners, UNIC Dhaka organized a virtual "Stand Up" Campaign through SMS (text messaging).

D. Making wider use of the United Nations information centre library as a resource

9. For many information centres, especially those in developing countries, the centre's library serves as a valuable resource for information on the United Nations. The number of visitors to United Nations information centre libraries is on the rise, growing from 244,420 in the biennium 2004-2005 to 288,862 in 2006-2007, an increase of 18 per cent. While the trend towards dissemination of information materials in electronic format is undeniable, for many information centres operating in developing countries hard copy materials remain an essential element of effective outreach. In 2007, the Department distributed 246,539 hard copy materials to United Nations information centres, 76 per cent of them to centres in developing countries. Some centres, in cooperation with libraries in academic, government and cultural institutions, have also organized training sessions for local librarians.

- **UNIC Prague** made a presentation at a Librarian Training Workshop, organized by a local non-governmental organization, on United Nations information resources for a group of 22 information professionals.
- **UNIC Nairobi** assisted in training eight librarians from Liberia, who were part of a capacity-building programme covering Internet searching, information technology in the library, and the use of online reference sources.

10. In 2007, the five most visited libraries in the network of United Nations information centres were: Ouagadougou (36,162), Lusaka (17,561), Harare (16,772), Bujumbura (13,099) and Windhoek (6,891).

E. Multilingualism in the work of UNICs

11. UNICs are able to reach wider segments of the public in the countries where they are located through producing information material in local languages. These include the Department's publications as well as those of the United Nations system and information centres' own locally produced information materials. Among frequently translated publications are: *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*, *UN in Brief*, *International Bill of Human Rights*, *60 Ways the UN Makes a Difference* and the *Millennium Development Goals*.

Box 2

Wealth of languages

United Nations information centres translate and produce United Nations materials in the following 36 local languages: Armenian, Azeri, Bangla, Czech, Bahasa Indonesia, Cebuano, Dutch, Ewe, Farsi, Georgian, German, Greek, Guaraní, Hindi, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Joola, Kabye, Lingala, Mandika, Moore, Myanmar, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Pulaar, Sereer, Sinhala, Slovenian, Soninke, Swedish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek and Wolof.

12. Currently, 28 information centres produce their own newsletters/bulletins, either on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. These are produced in 12 local languages, namely: Armenian, Bahasa Indonesia, Bangla, Czech, Georgian, Hindi, Japanese, Portuguese, Romanian, Ukrainian, Urdu and Uzbek. United Nations information centres also maintain websites in 29 local languages, in addition to five official languages.

13. In October 2007, UNIC La Paz organized the first ever Model UN in the Aymara language in cooperation with the University of Aquino. The key issues discussed during that historic Model UN were related to democratization, rural development, migration, food security and gender equality. The inaugural ceremony was attended by indigenous, municipal and education authorities in the region. That Model UN was fully conducted in Aymara, a language spoken by nearly 25 per cent of the Bolivian population. It is the first time in the history of the network of United Nations information centres that a Model UN was held in the language of indigenous peoples.

III. Working together at the regional level

14. The strengthening of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria has led to greater interaction among the centres in their regions on a range of matters. They include collective approaches to specific communications challenges, the sharing of tasks such as translation among centres, joint activities to highlight different issues, and assistance in addressing the operational needs and concerns of information centres in neighbouring countries. They also lead efforts to bring together regional communications groups to discuss common United Nations communications concerns and opportunities, and to develop joint projects on key issues.

- **UNIC Cairo** organized the second meeting of the United Nations Communications Group for the Arab Region in Cairo at the end of October 2007. Attended by over 60 participants, representing 27 United Nations entities, the meeting discussed practical measures to improve the image of the United Nations in the Arab world, to promote regional coordination of communications activities, and to increase awareness of the Millennium Development Goals in the region.

- **UNIC Mexico City** chairs the United Nations Regional Communications Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, established in July 2006. It has become a key partner in regional communications projects such as the Inter-Agency Communication Framework for Avian and Pandemic Influenza in the Americas.

- **UNIC Pretoria** supports the 17 United Nations information centres in sub-Saharan Africa through the sharing of information on everything from substantive issues and United Nations country team retreats to best practices and administrative concerns. With the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, UNIC Pretoria is working with other United Nations entities to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the event and galvanize attention for United Nations issues in sub-Saharan Africa.

- **UNIS Geneva, UNIS Vienna and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (UNRIC) Brussels** have collaborated in various ways, taking advantage of their respective strengths, information networks, and locations. They have developed together, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, an attractive and comprehensive website for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, called "Know Your Rights" (http://www.knowyourrights2008.org), which was launched on Human Rights Day 2007 in three languages (English, French and Italian).

15. In May 2007, the Department held a workshop in São Paulo, Brazil, for the communications officers of all of the information centres in the Americas. It focused on the increasingly prominent role that information centres play in communications at the country level and on strategic and innovative partnerships that centres can develop with civil society and the private sector. In January 2008, a similar regional workshop, funded by the Government of Japan, was held in Bangkok for the directors and information officers from information centres in Asia and the Pacific. The overall objective of the workshop was to support development in the region through improving understanding of the issues and the Organization's work in this area, and through increased collaboration on communications efforts among centres in Asia and the Pacific.

IV. Capacity-building

16. In order to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations information centres and to maximize their contribution to the overall communications objectives of the Organization, the Department has devoted more attention to strengthening the capacity of those offices through a combination of staff training, improvements in information and communications technology infrastructure and connectivity, and upgraded equipment.

A. Staff development and training

17. Following the redeployment of posts throughout the network in recent years, the Department has sought to ensure that staff are given the opportunities for professional development through training. In 2007, working with the Department of Management, the United Nations Development Programme and other offices, the Department of Public Information was able to organize 13 different training sessions for 66 of its field staff, representing approximately one quarter of its total field staff. Such training, for newly recruited staff, ranged from orientation to communications and library workshops, to procurement training. Two such library workshops were organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library:

- In **Santo Domingo**, a workshop for libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in January 2007 with extrabudgetary support from the Government of the Dominican Republic.
- In **Bangkok**, a workshop for Asia and the Pacific for reference staff from 11 information centres throughout the region was held in November 2007 at

the offices of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

18. Later this year the Department is planning to offer group training opportunities to some of the administrative support staff from its field offices, as well as to staff dealing with information and communications technology from certain centres. These staff would then be expected to serve as "trainers" for colleagues performing similar functions at information centres in neighbouring countries. In this way, limited budgetary resources for training can be maximized.

Box 3

Partnering with youth

UNIC Lagos in December 2006 joined three leading youth non-governmental organizations in Nigeria: the Youth Action Rangers of Nigeria (YARN), the Chris Ogunbanjo Foundation and the Professional Leaders' Forum, in launching the project "United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS) — Nigeria", a four-week training course on computer applications and the Internet. The programme benefits from financial support from Ericsson International and the CISCO Academy. Its success has generated interest on the part of Zenith Bank Plc, one of the leading commercial banks in Nigeria, to open a One-Stop IT Solution Centre in Lagos in 2008, where trainees and others can conduct research on information technology and development issues.

B. Expanding Internet services

19. In 2007, the Department created 26 new and revamped websites for information centres in developing countries, including 16 in sub-Saharan Africa. The websites were designed as a collaborative project by the information technology teams from the Department at United Nations Headquarters in New York and from UNRIC Brussels, working with the staff at the centres concerned. As a result, as of the end of the biennium 2006-2007, all 63 information centres have functioning websites where information is available in five official languages. The establishment of webmaster positions, all of which have now been filled, at key offices in the network — Brussels, Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria — will further strengthen the Department's virtual team of information technology specialists.

20. The Department is also pursuing other improvements in the information and communications technology infrastructure of United Nations information centres. Among them is a dedicated e-mail hosting solution that would result in coherent, easily identifiable e-mail addresses for the network, thereby alleviating the myriad problems associated with using multiple and varied e-mail systems and commercial service providers. In December 2007, the United Nations Information Centre in Lagos became the first to start using the new e-mail system, which will be expanded in 2008 with the establishment of UNIC.ORG e-mail accounts for all information centre staff worldwide.

- Between 2006 and 2007 there has been an increase of 11 per cent in the overall number of visitors to the websites maintained by United Nations information centres. During the same period, the average monthly page views for all information centres' websites grew from 34,705,581 in 2006 to 42,024,979 in 2007, a growth of 21 per cent.

C. Providing centres with new equipment

21. In 2007, the Department of Public Information provided new communications equipment to 31 information centres in developing countries. By arranging for the acquisition centrally, through the Procurement Service, the Department was able to benefit from economies of scale, reducing the average cost of desktop computers and digital cameras which are essential for information centres to perform their work effectively. The Department also purchased videoconference equipment for the centres in Brussels, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. Resources permitting, the Department plans to expand this initiative to other information centres around the world.

22. With the growing global trend towards web-based delivery of information, it is essential that information centres have up-to-date information on international developments and global issues as well as the equipment needed to access that information. The level of funding provided to the Department for the network of United Nations information centres for 2008, however, is below what is realistically needed and calls into serious question the ability of the Department to replace and upgrade communications equipment for its field offices in the current biennium.

V. Consultations with Member States

23. The Department, guided by the Committee on Information, has proceeded to further rationalize United Nations information centres in close consultation with Member States, especially those which host information centres. For centres where the cost of rent and maintenance continues to consume a significant share of their respective operational funds, the Department will renew its approach to the host Governments concerned with a view to securing extrabudgetary contributions and support, as appropriate, to supplement the regular programme budget and to increase the availability of resources for outreach activities to key local audiences.

24. The Department has taken note of the General Assembly's recommendation, in resolution 62/111 B, section II, regarding the special needs of Portuguese-speaking countries and of the offer made by the Government of Angola to host a centre for lusophone countries in Africa. While the Department recognizes those needs, even with the provision of rent- and maintenance-free premises, as generously offered by the Government of Angola, the Department would be unable to cover the ongoing operational costs and additional staffing that would be required from within existing resources. At the same time, it should be noted that the Portuguese Desk at the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels provides information materials on a daily basis to all United Nations offices operating in Portuguese-speaking countries. In addition, although the Department would welcome the opportunity to expand the information services it provides to countries not currently serviced by an information centre, it simply lacks the resources to do so.

VI. Conclusions

25. The Department of Public Information continues its efforts to rationalize how United Nations information centres work, with the aim of achieving better results. This is being achieved through expanded partnerships at the local and regional levels, a wider use of new information and communications technologies, and capacity-building through staff development and training. The Department recognizes the importance of United Nations information centres as key members of United Nations country teams and their support to the United Nations Resident Coordinator, within the context of system-wide coherence, and continues to focus on this essential aspect of their work. The Department continues to foster closer and more strategic collaboration with United Nations information centres, including through its strategic communications planning process described in part one of this report (A/AC.198/2008/2).

Section II

The United Nations website: progress towards parity among official languages, accessibility and content management

I. Background

26. The complex challenge of addressing the issue of parity among official languages on the United Nations website has been one to which the Department has been applying its best efforts for the past seven years. This challenge is also faced by all other content-providing offices. The practicality and the scale of resources needed to meet the request of the General Assembly have been submitted in earlier reports to the Committee on Information and to the Fifth Committee. The Secretary-General has addressed this issue in eight previous reports, including one submitted in 2007 for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session (A/AC.198/2007/3).

II. Website visits

27. The United Nations website has continued to be the main source of information about the activities of the Organization. Visitors from more than 212 countries and territories access the United Nations website, viewing more than 1.3 million pages daily. In order to quantify usage of the website, the Department is using "visits" as a second measure of usage in addition to "page views". An explanation of the various terms — visits, page views, accesses — was provided in section III, paragraph 5 (a), (b) and (c), of the 2007 report.

28. The website is used by different audiences in different ways. Users access news and other web pages, download audio and photos, and view videos. As such, analysing usage data is a complex process and industry standards in this regard have been evolving. There have also been problems with site availability owing to server downtime and capacity issues, as well as the incident in August 2007 when part of the United Nations website was compromised by a hacker who was able to gain access to the site and substitute elements of the website. These are being addressed

in the context of the roll-out of a content management system and the strengthening of website governance.

29. Table 1 below shows the number of visits, pages viewed and accesses to the United Nations website for the five-year period 2003 to 2007.

Table 1
Visits, page views and accesses to the United Nations website, 2003-2007*

United Nations website	*Visits*	*Page views*	*Accesses*
Yearly totals			
2003		268 027 080	2 165 122 997
2004		337 544 975	2 331 566 302
2005	35 322 875	396 566 178	2 766 987 638
2006	49 389 245	413 891 020	—
2007	54 347 341	477 555 957	
Daily averages			
2003		734 321	5 931 844
2004		922 254	6 370 400
2005	96 775	1 085 762	7 575 761
2006	135 313	1 133 948	—
2007	148 896	1 308 372	

* Because of server problems, statistics for a number of days were not available. To get the most accurate estimate for those days, data has been extrapolated by averaging the data from the days before and the days after these outages.

30. The overall rising trend held for the website as a whole in 2007 for both page views, which showed a 2.9 per cent increase, and unique visits, which showed an impressive 10.2 per cent increase over the previous year. Practices such as page caching mean the above numbers may be underestimated. Increases of usage among the languages have been varied. The non-English sites show the strongest growth, with an average increase in page views of 28.6 per cent in 2007. The Russian site shows the largest increase in page views, while the Chinese site shows the largest increase in unique visits. The number of page views actually declined by 3.7 per cent for the English site but the unique visits increased 3.9 per cent, indicating, as before, that more visitors are coming to the site but are viewing fewer pages on each visit. An analysis of the entry and exit pages indicates that many users are visiting pages directly instead of navigating to these pages from the home page. They are either bookmarking their favourite pages or arriving there through search engine links. The trend, however, is not the same for all the languages. In the case of Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish, the increase in unique visits is less than the increase in page views, while for Chinese and English the reverse is true.

Table 2
Increase in the number of page views and visits to the United Nations website across languages, 2005-2007

	Arabic	*Chinese*	*English*	*French*	*Russian*	*Spanish*	*www.un.org*
Page views							
2005	10 178 618	18 433 275	318 133 891	18 267 863	11 873 869	19 678 662	396 566 178
2006	12 346 648	24 203 023	365 400 934	21 065 351	16 335 047	24 540 017	463 891 020
2007	14 200 141	29 682 917	359 577 065	29 177 415	25 833 875	26 736 220	477 838 460
2007 versus 2006 (percentage)	+15.1	+22.6	-1.5	+38.5	+58.1	+8.9	+3.0
Visits							
2005	1 542 110	2 411 103	21 359 071	3 766 316	1 566 179	4 678 096	35 322 875
2006	2 445 858	4 085 582	28 737 205	4 596 119	2 919 180	6 605 301	49 389 245
2007	2 592 544	5 589 997	30 994 223	5 592 887	3 798 964	6 898 148	54 425 657
2007 versus 2006 (percentage)	+6.1	+ 36.8	+7.8	+21.7	+30.1	+4.4	+10.2

III. Adding new pages to the website

31. There has been notable progress in adding more new pages to the website. However, given the fact that far more pages are available in English and offices are continuingly adding pages in that language, the number of new pages in English is still higher than the number of pages added in the other languages. This unfortunately means that progress towards parity among languages remains a difficult challenge. In some areas, progress has been steady and key information areas on the website such as news — one of the most visited areas of the site — have made significant strides in enhancing the multilingual nature of the site.

32. Owing to the decentralized nature of the United Nations website, with more than 143 user offices directly posting material onto the site, not all pages are handled or managed by the Department. While the Department, through its Web Services Section, handles the bulk of the languages other than English and French, there is at present no count of the pages added individually by other offices because it is a labour-intensive process that will need to be implemented at the level of each content-providing office. The responsibility for producing their websites in the official languages lies with the individual author departments, as has been recognized by Member States. The Department of Public Information has sought to promote multilingualism actively on the United Nations website across the Secretariat bilaterally with author offices.

33. The Department has engaged in active liaison with, and provides advice and project management services to, author offices for new language sites, such as for the Peacebuilding Commission, the Office of the Secretary-General's Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the Economic and Social Council secretariat, among others. However, the Department's capacity to manage a large amount of these activities is limited to the extent that it not jeopardize the work on areas of the

site for which the Department is directly responsible. Furthermore, space and equipment constraints restrict the pace at which this effort can be carried out.

34. Table 3 below shows the number of new pages created and pages updated in 2007 by the Web Services Section of the Department of Public Information.

Table 3
New pages created and pages updated in 2007 by the Web Services Section of the Department of Public Information

	Arabic	*Chinese*	*English*	*French*	*Russian*	*Spanish**
New pages	2 085	2 568	2 024	2 126	2 101	2 083
Updated pages	4 525	5 680	5 121	4 642	5 414	10 730

* The number of updated pages for the Spanish site is very high because the Spanish Language Unit had the services of a number of volunteers and interns during the course of the year.

IV. Partnership with academic institutions

35. The agreements with universities for pro bono translations have resulted in a total of 2,552 new pages added to the website in Chinese, Russian and Spanish. The Zhejiang University in China provided 400 pages of translations in Chinese, and the Minsk State Linguistic University in Belarus translated 259 pages into Russian. But by far the most translations were received from the University of Salamanca in Spain, which assigned two teams of faculty and students who were able to deliver 1,893 pages of translations into Spanish. The topics of the translations included human rights, humanitarian affairs, ageing, energy, children, education, Cyberschoolbus and peacekeeping operations, among others. The quality of translation was fair at the beginning but improved after several revisions when students became more familiar with the United Nations and its terminology. Revisions by the Department of Public Information are still necessary and very crucial in ensuring accuracy. In addition, these translations require formatting and proofreading.

36. The Department has been continuing its efforts to enlist the support of an institution of higher learning for pro bono translation into Arabic. In this regard, support from Member States in establishing a relationship will go a long way in addressing this issue. An external translation agreement for French has not been pursued as there is more available content in French on the United Nations website, including most of the material produced by the Department, owing to the fact that many Secretariat offices/departments create and maintain content in French.

Table 4
Number of translated pages received and processed in 2007 under pro bono agreements with universities

	Chinese	*Russian*	*Spanish*
New pages	400	259	1 893

V. Reaching the goal of parity

37. In 2006, the General Assembly made four new Professional posts available to the Web Services Section to establish the separate Language Units. At the same time, however, the Assembly, in paragraph 66 of its resolution 61/121 B, introduced a set of new requirements, such as making all new and updated pages accessible for persons with disabilities. This has meant that the originally intended impact of the new posts has not been fully realized or because of the additional effort needed to meet the new requirement. The new posts have been filled and some of the resulting vacancies are in the process of being filled.

38. Daily updates and revision is a requirement for the website to remain relevant and useful. This in turn raises the complexity of the challenge of achieving parity. Table 3 shows the extent of the tasks borne by the Web Services Section. The commitment of resources to updating in all official languages is therefore essential, but comes at the cost of slowing the pace at which new material can be processed. It is important to note that each new page, of course, requires greater input of staff time than updating.

39. Access to official documents in all official languages has been available from the United Nations website since 2004, but it is only one aspect of moving towards the goal of parity. Other efforts to increase parity are centred on the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre (DHLink), which ensures that official documents are fully indexed and made accessible through the Official Document System (ODS) as well as in the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet). Documents are searchable on ODS by subject in all six official languages through the application of the UNBIS Thesaurus. The United Nations website provides links to both of these resources.

40. The DHLink continues to develop its web products with the aim of providing equitable access to United Nations information and knowledge in the six official languages. In collaboration with the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva, DHLink continues its retrospective digitization programme with a focus on Security Council documentation. Documents in all six official languages are scanned, processed for full text retrieval, and posted to ODS.

41. The Department also enhances the multilingual nature of the United Nations website through its continued work towards enhancing the multimedia elements of the site to an expanding global audience. Radio programmes in all the official languages, as well as a number of non-official languages, including Kiswahili and Portuguese, continue to enhance the multilingualism of the site and are available both in AM Radio quality for the listening public, and in high audio quality for broadcasters to download.

42. Webcasting, now available in the language delivered in addition to English, has become an important tool, again offering a daily enhancement of the multilingualism of the site. Websites created by the network of United Nations information centres are providing information in 28 non-official languages. The rationale behind the drive to enhance multilingualism on the website is ensuring wider access to information on the United Nations to all the peoples of the world, and technical improvements to the site are a key means to that end, along with progress in such areas as improving access for persons with disabilities.

VI. Accessibility and the United Nations website

43. The Department of Public Information is aggressively pursuing accessibility to the United Nations website by persons with disabilities, including visual and hearing disabilities, with a view to making information about the United Nations and its activities available to the widest possible audience. All new web projects are designed to meet accessibility requirements, complying with the World Wide Web Consortium standards, which at the present time are the only standards with worldwide recognition and acceptance. The additional effort required to create the new pages and to validate them against the standards has required additional production time, which has increased by at least 20 per cent. The creation of the website of the Secretariat for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provided an opportunity to further develop accessibility testing. The site was tested by an expert of the Royal National Institute of Blind People (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), as well as by a panel of screen-reader users.

44. As resources permit, older pages are corrected to address accessibility issues. The diagnosis and correction of accessibility barriers in existing pages is a process that is more time consuming than the creation of new accessible pages. Therefore, the Department has been pursuing its efforts to raise awareness on this issue, so that the accessibility factor is taken into account at the start of a project.

45. In adopting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 13 December 2006 (resolution 61/106), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to implement progressively standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system. To assist departments and offices across the Secretariat in producing accessible web content, a task force has been established to draft standards and procedures on the creation and maintenance of accessible websites. These standards will be promulgated through the Standards Working Group of the Information and Technology Board.

VII. Content management system and website governance

46. The need for a robust and secure content management system and its benefits have been highlighted in detail in section VI of the 2007 report (A/AC.198/2007/3). A workable governance mechanism goes hand in hand with a customized content management system. The Department has been continuing to work closely with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management on the acquisition of a web content management system. Over the course of the last year, the Department of Public Information participated in an evaluation exercise and the validation of a proof of concept for a web content management system as part of an overall Enterprise Content Management System.

47. Website governance can be significantly improved once a content management system is in place whereby a centralized template ensures organizational branding and lays down specific presentational requirements. In a content management system, since the content is separate from the presentation, the same content can be presented in different formats to match different contexts. The content management system would not only facilitate institutional branding and ensure easier content management, but would also aid content creation and publishing in all official languages, help to improve access to all web facilities for persons with disabilities,

improve content integrity by eliminating multiple copies and enabling strict version control, facilitate and enforce strong policies on content retention, meet or exceed all applicable standards for security and privacy, introduce a formal content publishing workflow, standards, review and approval process to reduce errors and maintain quality and integrity of content, establish pre-built templates for the most commonly requested content types, increase productivity for content creators and technical support staff, and, finally, make possible delivery of rich multimedia content and its management.

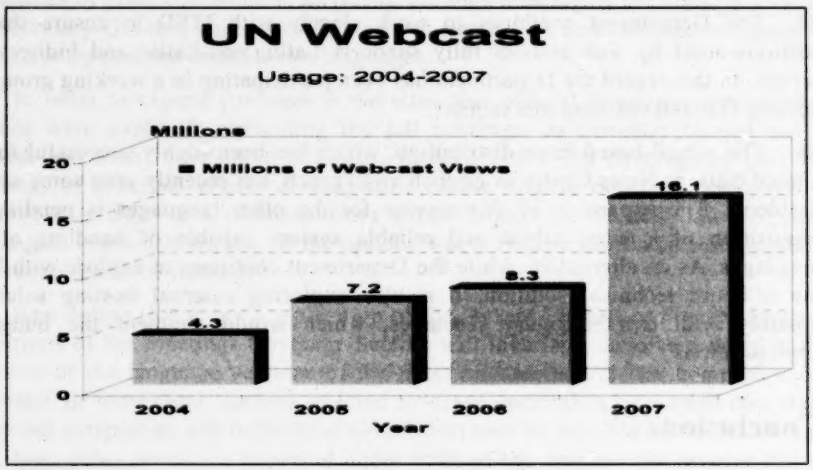
48. A coherent governance mechanism can be gradually put into place as more and more content is moved into the new system. It continues to be a challenge to put into place an overall governance scheme for coherent management and governance of the public website which allows author offices the flexibility and creativity to meet the needs of their particular audiences — be they government officials, the media, academia, civil society or the public at large — but which also ensures a unified technical infrastructure, consistency in presentation, organizational branding, as well as meeting the dual mandate of producing material in all official languages and addressing accessibility needs. To this end, the Department is working closely with the Chief Information Technology Officer and the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) to link the implementation of a content management system with the gradual adoption of a more robust governance system. The Department will work closely with other user offices and departments to develop such a permanent system over the course of 2008.

49. The selection of an enterprise content management software has been completed and a contract has been signed with a vendor for licences, training and limited professional services. The financial implications of introducing the system for the United Nations website have been outlined by the Department of Management in a report of the Secretary-General (A/62/510). The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has reviewed and endorsed the funding proposal, which is now awaiting review by the Fifth Committee. Only when funding is approved can the Organization move to the implementation of the new system. In the meantime, ITSD and the Department of Public Information have identified an open-source content management system that could be a short-term solution, oriented towards addressing change management and urgent issues. On the basis of a joint plan for this short-term solution, 10 staff from four departments have been trained and the preliminary requirements for this system have been implemented. The scope and pace of implementation of the move to this short-term solution are governed by the availability of resources in both the Department of Public Information and ITSD.

VIII. Webcasting

50. The United Nations Webcast (UN Webcast), established in 2001 in the Department of Public Information, has proven to be a cost-effective communications tool with global outreach. It broadcasts daily, live and on demand over the Internet, United Nations meetings, such as those of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and press briefings, conferences and events from United Nations Headquarters, as well as major United Nations conferences held at other locations. It provides to a global audience access in real time to, and a visual record of, United Nations

deliberations, as well as the position of individual Member States on various issues, thereby increasing awareness and a better understanding of the work of the Organization. It also promotes the Organization's core values of transparency and objectivity. In 2007, UN Webcast provided live and on-demand coverage of more than 2,200 events. During the same year, over 16.1 million webcast videos, live and archived, were viewed by users from over 198 countries and territories.



51. The dramatic increase in the worldwide audience of UN Webcast is an indication of the effectiveness of video on the web, and the Department is seeking ways to strengthen its webcasting capacity to further increase production and distribution of webcast video as well as to meet the high demand for this service both at Headquarters and at other duty stations, such as Geneva. During 2007, the UN Webcast team provided live and on-demand webcast coverage of all four sessions of the Human Rights Council that took place in Geneva. The cost for the 2007 webcast coverage of the Council was paid through voluntary contributions by Member States. On 8 December 2006, the Human Rights Council adopted decision 3/104,[2] requesting webcast coverage of all its future sessions on a regular basis. The Department will have to rely on the continuation of voluntary contributions by Member States to ensure that complete and uninterrupted webcast coverage of all sessions of the Council is provided. In the absence of these contributions, the coverage will need to be scaled back both for the Human Rights Council and at Headquarters should there be no replacement of staff sent to cover the Council.

52. In addition to sessions of the Human Rights Council, the UN Webcast provided live and on-demand webcast coverage of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007. Furthermore, in order to meet the demands for multilingualism, the Department is exploring ways to expand its webcast services in the six official languages, to the extent possible.

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/62/53), chap. II.B.

IX. Other issues

53. The Department continues to supplement staffing resources in the drive to enhance the website. In this regard, the Department expresses its gratitude to the Government of France for providing an associate expert to work on the French site. The Department continues to utilize aggressively the services of interns and skilled volunteers to complement the work performed by its staff.

54. The Department continues to work closely with ITSD to ensure that all software used by web authors fully supports Latin, non-Latin, and bidirectional scripts. In this regard the Department has been participating in a working group that advises ITSD in ensuring this support.

55. The e-mail-based news distribution, which has been highly successful for the United Nations News Centre in English and French, has recently seen some serious problems. The expansion of this service for the other languages is pending the acquisition of a more robust and reliable system capable of handling all the languages. As an alternative, while the Department continues to explore with ITSD the in-house technical solution, it is also exploring external hosting solutions, possibly with extrabudgetary resources, which would augment the budgetary appropriations.

X. Conclusions

56. The Department has continued its efforts to move towards parity among the official languages on the website, ensuring accessibility for the disabled and better managing the contents of the United Nations website. While the Department has been able to increase the volume of new material added to the site and handle the increased maintenance and updating workload, the capacity has been tempered by new requirements of ensuring access by persons with disabilities, and the heightened security requirements to make the site resistant to hackers. The Department has therefore focused its efforts on key areas that are visited more often, not only with new pages with textual information, but including webcasting, audio, video and photographic materials, all enhancing the multilingual and accessible nature of the United Nations website.

57. Balancing the need to ensure access together with a high level of security and efficiently managing the content, the Department is seeking to continually expand its outreach to a wider range of audiences in all regions of the world.

Annex

Press releases in additional official languages

1. The Department's Meetings Coverage Section currently provides full and comprehensive coverage of intergovernmental meetings and conferences in English and French, the two working languages of the Organization. It also provides summaries of press conferences, including the noon briefing by the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General, and issues full texts of statements, speeches and messages of the Secretary-General in those two languages.

2. In order to expand coverage to the other four official languages, a number of options were explored: replicating the full coverage, as currently carried out in English and French; selective coverage, namely, either full coverage of only the meetings of principal organs or adaptation of the English or French coverage of selected meetings; or translating from either English or French into the other languages. Implementing any of the options would require additional resources and different patterns of staffing.

3. Any option that is not a replication of the present English or French language operations of the Meetings Coverage Section will invariably involve a delay in the issuance of the language versions of the press releases and/or less comprehensive coverage. In some cases, such as selected coverage undertaken by a small core staff, same-day completion and delivery of the product may be possible. However, at least a 24-hour delay would be expected under most of the options that involve full or partial translation, or adaptation.

Options for making United Nations press releases available in each additional official language

Option I: Replication of full coverage

4. This requires multiplying the present meetings coverage operation, which functions in English and French, by the number of additional languages in which the output will also be produced. This would include statement-by-statement coverage of all open intergovernmental meetings and the final press release issued within two hours or so of the end of the meeting. The Secretary-General's statements and summaries of press conferences, including the noon briefing, would also be issued on the same day. Required resources for each additional language under this option would include:

Two editors at the P-4 level

One press officer at the P-3 level

One press officer at the P-2 level

Six press officers on general temporary assistance (GTA) fixed term (P-2)

Four support staff at G-5/6 (Other level)

12 additional press officers at the P-2 level for the General Assembly period

Four additional support staff at G-5/6 (OL) for the General Assembly period

5. The magnitude of resource requirements, should the Committee approve this option, amounts approximately to $7.2 million per annum for introducing press releases in four additional official languages.

Option II: Selective coverage

6. There are two possible alternatives for providing selective coverage:

(a) Coverage of **only the principal organs** — the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — but excluding subsidiary bodies and the Main Committees of the General Assembly. The press releases would be comprehensive and made available on the same day. Resource estimates below are based on the average number of meetings held by each of those bodies in the previous years. In 2007, the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council met 295 times. The staffing resources needed for this option are:

One editor at the P-4 level

One press officer at the P-3 level

One press officer at the P-2 level

One proofreader/editorial assistant (OL)

Replacement GTA funds for editor, press officer and support staff when they are on leave or sick (working estimate of 2 months)

One temporary press officer (P-3) during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

One temporary press officer (P-2) during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

One temporary proofreader/editorial assistant during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

7. The magnitude of resource requirements, should the Committee approve this option, amounts approximately to $1.9 million per annum for introducing press releases in four additional official languages.

(b) Coverage of **selected meetings** of the Security Council, the General Assembly and its Main Committees, as well as press conferences, with the senior editor deciding on a day-to-day basis what meetings would be covered within the available staffing resources. This would provide same-day availability of press releases on particular meetings and activities, although the breadth of coverage would be limited. A working estimate of requirements per language for this option is:

One editor at the P-4 level

One press officer at the P-3 level

One proofreader/editorial assistant (OL)

Replacement GTA funds for editor, press officer and support staff when they are on leave or sick (working estimate of 2 months)

One temporary press officer (P-3) during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

One temporary press officer (P-2) during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

One temporary proofreader/editorial assistant during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

8. The magnitude of resource requirements, should the Committee approve this option, amounts approximately to $2.0 million per annum for introducing press releases in four additional official languages.

Option III: Adaptation

9. A small core staff attached to the Meetings Coverage Section would adapt — condense to essential elements — comprehensive press releases from English or French into the other official languages. Adaptation would begin only after completion of English or French versions, and therefore could not be available on the same day. To make up for lack of comprehensiveness, adaptations would contain links to the relevant documents in the other official languages. Estimated resources would be:

One editor at the P-4 level

One press officer at the P-3 level

One proofreader/editorial assistant (OL)

Replacement GTA funds for editor, press officer and support staff when they are on leave or sick

Two temporary press officers during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

One temporary proofreader/editorial assistant during the main General Assembly session (3.5 months)

10. The magnitude of resource requirements, should the Committee approve this option, amounts approximately to $2.0 million per annum for introducing press releases in four additional official languages.

Option IV: Translation — with delivery 24 hours later or more

11. This option would combine translation through the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), with limited Department of Public Information staff review to revise and edit the final text in each additional language.

12. The Department assumes that contractual translation through DGACM would be used, although at present there is no commitment to undertake such work and discussions would have to be held to that end if the General Assembly decides to pursue the option. The Central Translation Unit currently pays external contractors anywhere from $125 to $230 per 1,000 words, depending on the complexity and/or urgency of the text and the experience level of the translator. It might also be possible at a certain future point to negotiate a different fee structure for

guaranteeing a certain amount of work for freelance translators, although such an arrangement does not exist at present.

13. In 2007, the English coverage section produced 1,810 press releases with total pages of 9,753. Given the current fee structure and using estimates provided by DGACM, the cost for translating meetings coverage into one language would be anywhere from $731,475 to $1.345 million per annum. To translate the noon briefing each day would be another 2,087 pages, or from $156,525 to $288,006 per annum, and translating the 650 pages of other briefings would be from $48,750 to $89,700 per annum. Thus, the total cost to translate the current output of the Meetings Coverage Section into one language would be from $936,750 to $1.723 million per annum, and for four languages from $3.747 million to $6.894 million per year. Translations would strive to be available within 24 hours of a meeting, but this could not always be guaranteed.

14. The translated versions would then have to be printed and posted on the website and it is envisioned that that could be done with one staff member at General Service, Other level per language, at the cost of $333,696 for four languages. It should also be noted that the cost of translation could be reduced by limiting it to certain meetings — perhaps the principal organs, for example, as in the selected coverage alternative. The magnitude of resource requirements, should the Committee approve this option, ranges from $4.1 million to $7.2 million per annum for introducing press releases in four additional official languages.

Other issues

15. There would be additional costs for equipment, office space, telephone and other services for the staff that would be producing the language versions of press releases under any of the above options. Further, and especially in the case of options that require direct coverage in other languages, the current set-up in conference rooms was conceived to accommodate only a team of four press officers — two each working in English and French. The problem would be further compounded by the fact that the meetings coverage needs of the Department of Public Information in the Capital Master Plan are also based on four work stations/desks in the conference rooms. Therefore, any of the options that involve live or direct coverage in conference rooms would require either four to eight additional work stations (one or two per additional official language) in conference rooms, which would be extremely difficult to accommodate now and would also require a change in the Plan, or coverage being undertaken remotely using in-house audio-visual connection.

16. It should be noted, should the Committee decide to choose one of the options above, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that a statement of programme budget implications reflecting a detailed breakdown of the requirements will be submitted to the Committee prior to its final decision.